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# Case Outlined Against 4 on Trial for Dealing in Guns for I.R.A.

By JOSEPH P. FRIED

A Federal prosecutor charged yesterday that four men from the New York area conspired to obtain guns, explosives and missiles for the Provisional Irish Republican Army, the outlawed group battling British rule in Northern Ireland.

As arguments in the trial of the four were delivered in Federal District Court in Brooklyn, the courtroom was packed with nearly 100 relatives and supporters of the defendants.

The prosecution did not say how much of the reported contraband was shipped to Northern Ireland. But when the defendants were arrested last June, Federal authorities said that no missiles had been sold to the men, and that most of the other weapons were seized before export.

Attorneys for two of the defendants reserved their right to deliver their opening statements after the prosecution finished presenting its case. All four men say they support the I.R.A.'s goal of ousting the British from Northern Ireland.

Attorneys for the other two defendants admitted yesterday that their clients had worked to "get most of the things" the prosecution charged, but argued the men were not guilty because they were illegally "entrapped" by a Government informant into thinking they were working with the Central Intelligence Agency.

The chief prosecutor in the case, Carol B. Amon, said that one of the defendants had asked the informant, Michael Hanratty, to sell him remote-control equipment for use in detonating bombs, as well as other material, and that Mr. Hanratty later agreed to become an informant for the Government.

Last fall, in the same courthouse, a similar defense was successfully used

by five other men charged with conspiring to smuggle weapons to the I.R.A. Those five were acquitted when the jury apparently believed the defense argument that the C.I.A. had sanctioned their activities.

The defendants in the current trial are Gabriel Megahey, a 40-year-old bartender from Jackson Heights, Queens; Andrew Duggan, 49, of New City, N.Y., an operating engineer on construction projects; and two brothers from Brooklyn, Eamon Meehan, 34, a carpenter, and Colm Meehan, 36, a bartender. Mr. Duggan is a United States citizen; the other three are natives of Northern Ireland living here as aliens.

Their trial on a seven-count indictment is expected to take a month or more. The most serious of the conspiracy and arms-trafficking counts carry maximum prison terms of 10 years.

In outlining the state's case to the jury of six men and six women, Mrs. Amon said of the aim of the men's year-long activities: "It was to obtain as many guns, as much ammunition, as many explosives and as many surface-to-air missiles as they could to export to the Provisional I.R.A. in Northern Ireland."

She said that at one meeting with a Federal undercover agent that was secretly videotaped by the authorities, one defendant said he would pay \$10,000 for each of five missiles, and that these were wanted "to shoot down British helicopters." In another episode in the conspiracy, she said, authorities intercepted in Newark a large, mislabeled shipping container that included 51 rifles and handguns.

Bruce Goldstone, Mr. Megahey's attorney, told the jury in Judge Charles P. Sifton's courtroom that his client was innocent because he had believed he was "working with the C.I.A."

His client's belief in the C.I.A.'s in-

volvement, the lawyer said, existed because Mr. Hanratty, "was an operative of the C.I.A." who "presented himself as acting on behalf of this Government." Edward Panzer, a lawyer for Mr. Duggan, offered a similar argument.

The C.I.A. has said in affidavits that Mr. Hanratty never worked for the organization.

David Lewis and Michael Dowd, attorneys for the Meehan brothers, reserved their right to give their statements later. Before the trial, Judge Sifton ruled that they could not present to the jury a defense that their clients were not guilty by reason of insanity. The lawyers sought to argue that the two brothers had been tortured while in a Northern Ireland prison for two years in the 1970's and that this experience created a "post-traumatic stress disorder" that left them "unable to conform to the law."